Tips for being a successful chemistry major

Course work

General advice

• Ask a lot of questions
  o Even if you are not quite sure what you want to ask, take a shot and start the conversation.
• Go to office hours
  o Even if you know the material, get to know the instructor.
• Do every homework problem
  o There is no such thing as too much practice.
• Get to know at least one faculty member a year
  o You will need three letters when you leave.
  o You can also get letters from teaching assistants, but a letter from a professor typically carries more weight.

Chemistry specific advice

• Use model sets
  o Build it, draw it, turn it, draw it.
  o This is how you learn to visualize chemistry.
• Only take one advanced laboratory per term
  o You can take research along with one advanced chemistry lab; but, don’t put off labs so you have to take two in a term.
• Attend seminars
  o Many named lectures are geared for a broader audience.
  o This is where you will see how scientists interact and communicate their results.
  o This is a facet of Graduate School.

Experience

Get involved in research

• If you only have time for research or a minor, put your effort into the research.
• There is a lot of chemistry happening across the campus – look to other departments.
  o Plan to do it for more than one term.

How to land a research project

• Do not send out a mass email.
  o Know what you are interested in.
  o Know what the faculty member is working on.
• Get to know your teaching assistant and what he or she does.
  o It could be a good foot in the door, if the teaching assistant can put in a good word for you.
• If you have to work to pay for school, try to work in your area of interest.